



שירות פסיכולוגי חינוכי
עיריית בית שמש
מינהל חינוך נוער וקהילה

כ' אייר תשפ"א 2/5/2021



Dear Parents and Teachers,

In the aftermath of the tragedy at Meron, the Sherut Hapsichologi – School Psychology Services - Beit Shemesh, sends this message:

As parents and teachers, you have an important role in tending to the nefesh and mental health of your children and families. Some of you know children or adults who were at Meron, who saw or heard difficult experiences/images and returned unsettled, confused, anxious, and/or with feelings of helplessness. In response to the tragedy, children can exhibit fear, worry, and confusion. In addition, children can show a sudden and uncharacteristic change in their behavior, including bursts of crying or anger, fear of being alone, sleep disturbances, etc. Likewise, this incident can trigger reactions of stress and anxiety in those who have previously experienced similar experiences, but were not at Meron on Lag B'Omer.

It is extremely important to provide short interventions with children in the first days following a traumatic event, in order to prevent future anxiety and post-trauma. We understand how difficult it is to speak with children about traumatic incidents. At the same time, it is necessary, to prevent them from hearing partial or wrong information that might frighten or confuse them. It is important that the adult who speaks with them remains calm and emotionally available, and is capable of listening to what the child shares.

The three stages of intervention are: **Information, Ventilation, and Re-organization.**

Stage 1: Information. Provide the child with relevant and age-appropriate information. Explain and answer their questions simply and clearly. Try to limit their exposure to difficult images and videos. It is important to tell the child that we may not know all the facts and that we may know more at a later time. In addition, it is important to stress that the incident is over and that everyone who was at Meron are being taken care of or has returned home.

Stage 2: Emotional Ventilation. Allow expression of thoughts and feelings. Ask the child how/what they are feeling about what you just told them, and what they are thinking. Remember that for the children, and for ourselves, every reaction is normal. Generally speaking, intense reactions tend to pass after a few days. In addition, know that different people feel and react in different ways, and every reaction is acceptable. Depending on the child's age, useful expressive strategies include drawing, writing, praying, reciting tehilim, and strengthening the child's faith.

Stage 3: Re-organization

Ask the children what can they do now, how can they go forward. Maybe they can help someone or recite tehilim for the injured, draw a picture for a sick child. In emergency



שירות פסיכולוגי חינוכי
עיריית בית שמש
מינהל חינוך נוער וקהילה



situations encourage and assist the child to take action, and to continue normal daily activities like helping around the house or playing with siblings.

If your child or someone from your immediate family was at Meron at the time of the incident:

1. Allow them to express in their own words what they experienced/saw/heard/felt. Try to repeat the story they told, and ask if you heard it right. Listen for the content and feelings that arise from their description of the events.
2. Tell your children that most people find internal strength to cope, and recover as time goes on. Tell them that sharing their feelings and thoughts is proof of their inner strength.
3. Identify their feelings and thoughts, and tell your children that what they are feeling right now is logical, understandable and natural in this situation.
4. Children can express many different emotions, including those we may consider “not appropriate” or “not related” to the situation. In these moments there are no right or wrong responses. Children and teens express themselves in different ways.
5. If your child is unwilling or uninterested in talking about it, say that you’re here and available to listen whenever they are ready. Don’t pressure them to share or speak, just remain open and available.

We at the Psychological Services are available for any question or need.
We can be reached by phoning the Moked 106 or by phone: 02-633-4555